

On Purpose

Linda LaRocque





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We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

ArtAge Publications

Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President

PO Box 19955

Portland OR 97280

503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998

bonniev@seniorthatre.com

www.seniorthatre.com

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ON PURPOSE

by

Linda Larocque

CAST

NARRATOR: Male or Female.

OLD MAN: Male.

OLD SEA GULL: Male.

Place

A deserted beach.

Time

The present.

Setting: A weathered picnic table overlooking a deserted beach. It is chilly and drizzle is in the air. The OLD MAN is dressed in warm clothes. Beside him, the OLD GULL.

NARRATOR: On a weathered picnic table overlooking the beach and pier, the old man sat in front of his now empty and abandoned concession stand that he had run for at least a hundred years. "Unsafe and too old," said the Mayor. "We must tear it down!" said the councilmen and hence the decision was made for demolition to begin. So the old man was there to say goodbye, to sit at the crumbling picnic table one last time. They were due any moment, the wrecking ball, with the demolition crew. In minutes this place and along with it, the old man's life, would be gone. The early morning drizzle with its accompanying cold, harsh wind had managed to keep even the most seasoned beachcombers away. Perhaps it was best, he thought. This should be a kind of private funeral, no public viewing-- for family only, perhaps.

OLD MAN: Tomorrow it will all be gone.

NARRATOR: Perched on the table, next to him was his friend of many years, the old gull.

OLD GULL: Yes, and it's a sad day. I have had none sadder in fact.

OLD MAN: The demolition crew is due shortly.

OLD GULL: And the wrecking ball.

OLD MAN: I'm going to leave when they arrive.

OLD GULL: And so shall I.

OLD MAN: Where will you go?

OLD GULL: Someplace far away. I will fly until my wings can no longer take me. And you, Old Man, what about you? Where will you go now?

OLD MAN: Home. I will take the same path along the beach as I took yesterday and the week before and the week before that and the week before that. But for me tomorrow will be the saddest day because there will be no reason to take the path anymore. There will be no place to go. My life is ended, but I am not yet dead.

OLD GULL: Maybe we should have left here long ago, long before this sad day.

OLD MAN: I have thought of that myself but somehow I couldn't. I had to stay.

OLD GULL: And so did I, even though I know that staying is painful and takes courage.

OLD MAN: I wonder, Old Gull, what takes the greater courage, leaving or staying.

OLD GULL: But alas Old Man, we will never know.

OLD MAN: I'm going to miss you my friend.

OLD GULL: And I, you.

OLD MAN: Through all the years, Old Gull, you were the only one who understood this place as I have. We had our own language.

OLD GULL: Let us talk now of old memories, of things we will miss and perhaps this way our sadness will not last as long.

NARRATOR: And so, like two old birds whose wings were now used more for huddling than for flying, the old man and the old gull found comfort in sharing their mutual and unbearable grief.

OLD GULL: I am confused and afraid now because I no longer have a purpose.

OLD MAN: I know. I feel the same.

OLD GULL: It helps my heart to know that you feel as I.

OLD MAN: You may be right, Old Gull. Perhaps that is why we came here today. We need to say these things.

OLD GULL: And we need to hear these things.

NARRATOR: Then next, like a tailor sewing up a torn garment one stitch at a time, word by word, memory by memory, they sewed up one another's wounds and it was good.

OLD MAN: What will you miss?

OLD GULL: The children and how they would chase me on the beach. The more I would squawk the more they would chase. They never gave up trying to catch me. And you? What will you miss?

OLD MAN: The old rose bush by the back door.

OLD GULL: Oh yes. That was indeed a grand old bush. It was the finest in town.

OLD MAN: Everyone who walked by it, old or young, would stop to enjoy its fragrance and they would smile. It's impossible to smell something so beautiful without smiling, Old Gull. I will miss that bush.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!